

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 BIB-01 HA-05 CIAE-00 PM-05 INR-07  
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AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMCONSUL TRIESTE POUCH  
AMCONSUL TURIN POUCH  
US DOCOSOUTH  
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 1343

USDOCOSOUTH FOR INTAF

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, IT  
SUBJECT: MEETING OF SOCIALIST PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE SOCIALIST PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE  
HAS APPROVED PARTY SECRETARY CRAXI'S PROPOSAL TO CONVENE  
A NATIONAL CONGRESS IN ROME ON MARCH 29 TO APRIL 2.  
ALTHOUGH ONLY A BARE MAJORITY OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE  
VOTED FOR HIS PROPOSAL, CRAXI'S VICTORY MAY LAUNCH HIM  
ON HIS WAY TO CONTROL OF THE PARTY. END SUMMARY.

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1. CNCLUDING A TWO-DAY MEETING ON JANUARY 20, THE  
SOCIALIST PARTY'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE APPROVED PARTY  
SECRETARY CRAXI'S PROPOSAL TO HOLD A NATIONAL  
CONGRESS IN ROME ON MARCH 29 TO APRIL 2. THE VOTE  
WAS 83 IN FAVOR (ONE VOTE MORE THAN THE NECESSARY  
MAJORITY) AND 63 AGAINST, WITH THE REMAINING VOTES  
NOT CAST. IN THE BALLOTING, THE CRAXI AND SIGNORILE

FACTIONS (83 VOTE) WERE OPPOSED BY THE FACTIONS OF MANCA-DE MARTINO (RP VOTES), MANCINI (18 VOTES) AND ACHILLI (5 VOTES), ALL THREE OF WHICH WANTED TO POSTPONE THE CONGRESS. THERE WERE A FEW NOTABLE DEFECTIONS FROM THE MACA-DE MARTINO FACTION, INCLUDING VITTORELLI, THE EDITOR OF AVANTI. THE FINAL TALLY OF THOSE SUPPORTING CRAXI WAS, HOWEVER, DECIDEDLY SHORT OF THE 100 MEMBERS THAT SIGNORILE HAD EARLIER TOLD THE PRESS WERE IN HIS POCKET. MOREOVER, THE DEBATE PRECEDING THE VOTE WAS CHARACTERIZED BY SHARP ATTACKS ON CRAXI, ESPECIALLY FOR HIS HANDLING OF THE GOVERNMENT CRISIS, BY DE MARIINO, MANCA AND PARTICULARLY MANCINI. THE LEADERS OF THE LOSING FACTIONS ALSO COMPLAINED TO THE PRESS THAT CRAXI'S FORCES HAD BOUGHT BODIES AND MADE DEALS IN THE CRASS MANNER OF FOOTBALL MANAGERS.

2. CRAXI HAD TO WIN THIS BATTLE. IN TAKING POWER IN 1976, HE BECAME HEAD OF A PARTY IN THE HANDS OF OTHERS, NOTABLE MOST OF THOSE WHO OPPOSED HIM AT THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING. IN THE 32-MEMBER DIRECTORATE, FOR INSTANCE, HE CAN COUNT ON ONLY 10 VOTES. SMALL WONDER HE HAS HAD TO FOLLOW POLICIES WITH WHICH HE IS NOT ALWAYS IN AGREEMENT--MOST NOTABLY AT THE MOMENT THE PARTY'S PROPOSAL FOR COMMUNIST ENTRY IN THE GOVERNMENT WHEN CRAXI

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PERSONALLY FAVORS A GOVERNMENT WITH THE COMMUNISTS ONLY IN THE MAJORITY. CRAXI'S STRENGTH IN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE HAS BEEN GREATER BUT EVEN THERE LAST WEEK HE BARELY HAD--AND ONE WONDERS BY WHAT MEANS HE ACHIEVED--THE NUMBER OF VOTES NECESSARY TO GET HIS CONGRESS.

3. THE POINT OF THE CONGRESS, WHICH WAS NOT DUE TO MEET UNTIL THE SUMMER OF 1979, IS THAT IT CAN ELECT A NEW CENTRAL COMMITTEE WHICH IN TURN CAN ELECT A NEW DIRECTORATE. HENCE, IF CRAXI AND SIGNORILE HAVE CONTROL OF THE CONGRESS--AND THEY CLAIM THEY WILL HAVE--CRAXI WILL AT LAST, AFTER NEARLY TWO DIFFICULT YEARS, BE ABLE TO GET HIS HANDS ON THE LEVERS OF PARTY POWER. THAT IS WHY THE CONGRESS IS CRUCIAL AND WHY HE DARED NOT LOSE THE STRUGGLE IN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OVER CONVENING IT.

4. WHAT CONCLUSIONS CAN BE DRAWN FROM THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE SESSION? PENDING DISCUSSIONS WITH PARTY LEADERS IN THE COMING WEEKS, WE WOULD SUGGEST THE

FOLLOWING.(1)THE PARTY REMAINS DEEPLY SPLIT AND  
CRAXI HAS A LONG,HARD WAY YET TO GO BEFORE HE HAS  
FIRM CONTROL OF THE PARTY. (2) CRAXI'S POSITION  
IS DEPENDENT ON THE SUPPORT OF SIGNORILE: WHILE THE  
TWO ARE IN CLOSE ALLIANCE AT THE MOMENT, EACH IS A  
REPRESENTATVIE OF OPPOSITE WINGS OF THE PARTY.  
CONSEQUENTLY THERE IS AN INHERENT TENSION IN THE  
STRUCTURE OF CRAXI'S POWER. (3) AS A RESULT OF HIS  
VICTORY HOWEVER NARROW, CRAXI MAY HAVE MARGINALLY  
GREATER CONTROL OVER PARTY POLICY IN THE FORTHCOMING  
NEGOTIATIONS ON A NEW GOVERNMENT.GARDNER

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## Message Attributes

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